THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS – A PASCHAL HOMILY?

BY

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In recent years, as is well known, new evidence for the Easter celebration in the pre-Nicene Church has come to light and this has been conveniently summarized by Professor F. L. Cross in his study of I Peter: [1]

1. Melito of Sardis' Homily on the Passion, edited by Dr. Bonner of Michigan in 1940,[2] is a carefully composed text for an actual Easter celebration as held in the third quarter of the second century which may well reflect primitive practice.
2. The Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus, with its detailed account of the Paschal baptism, confirmation, eucharist and paschal fast is evidence for the Easter celebration as held in Rome in the late second century, and to this may be added: a. the Paschal homily attributed to the same writer which appears to possess an Hippolytean basis; b. the last two chapters of the Epistle to Diognetus which may be fragments of a liturgical sermon for Easter Day delivered by Hippolytus; [3] c. the fragments of Hippolytus' discourse *περὶ τοῦ πάσχα* which belong to a Paschal vigil sermon.
3. Other references in Irenaeus, Origen and Athanasius.[4]

While this new evidence is of the greatest value in filling out the information provided by the Quartodeciman controversy it must

[1] I Peter: *A Paschal Liturgy* (1954) pp. 8–11. I am much indebted to his illuminating work.

[2] In *Studies and Documents* ed. K. and S. Lake XII (1940); B. Lohse, Die Passa — Homilie des Bischofs Meliton von Sardes (1958); for a Latin version H. Chadwick, J.T.S. Vol. XI (Apl. 1960) p. 76–82.

[3] Cf. ad Diogn. 12. 9, *καὶ τὸ κυρίου πάσχα προέρχεται.* On the other hand 11.5, *οὗτος ὁ ἀεί, ὁ σήμερον υἱὸς λογισθείς* has seemed to some exegetes more appropriate to a Feast of the Nativity.

[4] Iren. Demonstr. Apost. Preaching 25; Orig. Toura Fragment 'On the Pasch'; Ath. Festal Eps.

be recognised that first hand documentation of the Easter Feast for the first century and the early part of the second century is still lacking unless we accept Professor Cross' view that I Peter is a Paschal Liturgy compiled for the celebrant's part for the Paschal Vigil – the most solemn occasion of the Church's year. Yet, as Cross [5] points out, it is certain that Easter was celebrated from the earliest days as is proved by the universality of its observance when it appears and still more by the Semitic name Pasch (or Passover) which it bears.[6] The purpose of this paper is to point to certain indications of the celebration of the Feast in Egypt in the early part of the second century A.D. which are, I believe, contained in the Epistle of Barnabas.

This Epistle is taken as an Alexandrian production by the majority of commentators and probably dates from the early years of the reign of Hadrian (117–138 A.D.).[7] The writer was, I believe, a converted Jew who continued to employ the catechetical, homiletical and exegetical methods of the synagogue in his role as a Christian teacher. The personal references and character of the introductory and closing chapters seem to preclude the theory that the Epistle is a pseudepigraphical work. Rather it is, as the writer states, a letter addressed to a definite Christian community somewhere or other in Egypt, which was in danger of falling back into Judaism as the result of the activity of militant Judaizers. Was then the Epistle composed solely for the leaders of the community – or was it designed to be read at corporate gatherings for public worship? We wish to suggest that the Epistle was designed to be read at the Paschal Feast which culminated in the Easter baptism and eucharist – a solemn occasion when large numbers of Christians

[5] Op. cit. p. 7. A no. of scholars have maintained that the Markan Passion narrative contains indications of a Sunday Paschal Feast; see M. H. Shepherd, The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse pp. 34–7.

[6] *ὥστε ἑορτάζωμεν* in I Cor. 5. 8 is not certainly a reference to the Christian Pasch; rather it is a figure of the Christian life as a whole. It is interesting that painted Easter Eggs were originally called Pasch eggs.

[7] Perhaps I may be permitted to refer to my papers in C.Q.R. Vol. 159 (Apl. 1958) pp. 211–230; Vol. 160 (July 1959) pp. 320–334 and in J.E.A. Vol. 44 (1958) pp. 101–107 where the statements in this paragraph are discussed in detail.

were gathered together; and that the writer has adapted older catechesis and homiletic material (based on Jewish models) with this Feast in mind. We must now put this hypothesis to the test:

A. *The Emphasis on Suffering:* The number of references to suffering in the Epistle is remarkable. The verb *πάσχω* is used 13 times [8] (12 times with reference to Jesus' sufferings) as against 7 times in the whole *Corpus Paulinum*, 4 times in the Epistle to the Hebrews and 12 times in I Peter. Coupled with *πάσχω* is the use of *ὑπομένω* which occurs 5 times.[9] A favourite theme of the writer – indeed it becomes almost a refrain – is that Jesus endured to suffer. Professor Cross has observed that the primitive kerygma did not normally include an explicit reference to Jesus' sufferings and this also appears to have been the case with the credal formulae underlying the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.[10] However, in the Paschal Orations of Melito and Hippolytus, where the Old Testament types of the Paschal redemption are worked out, the theme of suffering is constantly found: Cf. Melito 46: "What is the Passover? It is so called from what befell – that is from "suffer" and "be suffering" *(ἐκ γὰρ τοῦ παθεῖν καὶ πάσχειν)*. Learn then who is the sufferer and who suffers with him. Behold the Lord comes to the world, to the sufferer to heal. . . . But the Lord had by a previous dispensation ordained his sufferings in the patriarchs and prophets and all the people, sealing them through the law and the prophets . . . So also the Passion of the Lord, manifested of old from afar and seen through a type is thus today fulfilled". Cf. also Hippolytus Paschal Homily 49: "This was the Passover *(πάσχα)* which Jesus desired to suffer *(παθεῖν)* on our behalf. By suffering he freed us from suffering and by death He conquered death . . ." [11] We can hardly doubt that 'Pasch' was believed to derive from the verb

[8] 4 times in Ch. 5; twice in Ch. 6; 5 times in Ch. 7 and twice in Ch. 12. *τὸ πάθος* is found at 6. 7 and *ἡ πληγὴ* at 7. 2.

[9] All in Ch. 5.

[10] Ign. ad. Trall. 9. 1–2; ad. Smyrn. 1. 1–2 where *ἀφ' οὗ καρποῦ ἡμεῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεομακαρίστου αὐτοῦ πάθους* appears to be an insertion made by the writer into the kerygmatic formula; ad Eph. 18.2 where *τῷ πάθει* seems to refer to the baptism; Polyc. ad Phil. 2. 1.

[11] I owe these references to Professor Cross, op. cit. pp. 14–15 whose translations are given above.

πάσχω and that this was a leading theme of the Easter celebration. The frequent use of this verb in connexion with Jesus' sufferings in the Epistle of Barnabas, in contrast to the rest of the Apostolic Fathers, would therefore be appropriate if the writer had this Feast in mind. For him Jesus' sufferings were central to the fact of redemption and had been foretold in the prophetic tradition: "Since therefore he was destined to be manifest and to suffer *(πάσχειν)* in the flesh the passion *(τὸ πάθος)* was foretold. For the prophet says concerning Israel, "Woe unto their soul, for they have plotted an evil plot against themselves, saying, 'Let us bind the Just one, for he is unprofitable to us' ". (Barn. 6. 7. quoting Isa. 3. 9). The writer also held that Christians suffer in mystical union with Christ although he does not develop this theme to the extent found in I Peter. Cf. 7. 11: "But why is it that they put the wool in the midst of the thorns? It is a type of Jesus placed in the Church, because whoever wishes to take away the scarlet wool must suffer much *(πολλὰ παθεῖν)* because the thorns are terrible and he can gain it only through pain. Thus, he means, those who will see me, and attain to my kingdom must lay hold of me through pain and suffering *(θλιβέντες καὶ παθόντες λαβεῖν με)*" – a theme appropriate to the solemn Paschal gathering and especially to a community which was suffering from the assaults of a militant Judaism.

B. *The Nature of the Feast:* F. E. Brightman, in an article on the Quartodeciman dispute,[12] was the first to show that the Paschal celebration commemorated the whole redemptive work of Christ in his death, resurrection, ascension and second advent. For the early Church the observance of Good Friday was not separated in time from that of Easter Day and Ascension Day but all were fused together in a single Paschal commemoration which was both a solemn and joyous occasion and one which was attended by every Christian worthy of the name. We have already mentioned the strong emphasis placed by the epistle on suffering; but the other aspects of redemption are not forgotten as the following examples will show:

[12] *J.T.S.* 25 (1923–24) pp. 254–270. C. W. Dugmore, in a paper read at the Third International Conf. on Patristic Studies, Sept. 1959, has however disputed Brightman's view.

a. 5. 6–7: "Learn: the Prophets who received grace from him prophesied of him, and he, in order that he might destroy death and show forth the resurrection from the dead, because he must needs be manifested in the flesh, endured, in order to fulfil the promise made to the fathers, and himself prepare for himself the new people and show while he was on earth that he himself will raise the dead and judge the risen." While this is not wholly clear it would seem that the writer regards Jesus' endurance, suffering, resurrection and the bringing into existence of the Church as parts of a single redemptive process.

b. 6. 2–4: Here the testimonia concerning Christ as the Stone, which were well known in the early Church,[13] occur as part of a larger series of proof texts which are referred, *inter alia*, to the plotting of the Jews against Jesus, the entry into Christ through baptism, the second creation and Christain worship. Barnabas' version is interesting in that it contains differences from the version in I Peter 2. 6–8 and Rom. 9. 33. The introduction in 6. 2, "And again the prophet says that he was placed as a strong stone for crushing *(εἰς συντριβήν)* appears to be a free rendering of Isa. 8. 14 (LXX) or Dan. 2. 34, 45 in view of the fact that *συντριβή* means "rubbing away", "crushing", "destruction".[14] The thought is of Christ, as a *λίθος ἰσχυρός*, destroying those who dash against him. This is following an exact quotation of Isa. 28. 16 (LXX) as far as *ἔντιμον*, in contrast to I Peter and Romans who quote a version nearer to the Hebrew text. 6. 3, "And whosoever shall hope on it shall live forever" appears to be another reference to Isa. 28. 16–17 (LXX) although the connexion is loose. CL certainly understood it so for they read *ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτόν* under the influence of the LXX. To the question "Is our hope then upon a stone?" the explanation is given that the Lord set *(τέθεικεν)*[15] his flesh in strength,

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[13] Mk. 12. 10–11, Lk. 20. 18, Acts 4. 11, Rom. 9. 33, I Pet. 2. 6–8, Cyprian Test. I 16 etc.

[14] As in Vett. Val. 74, 4; Heliodorus 10. 28; not elsewhere in early Christian literature.

[15] J. Rendel Harris, *Testimonies*, I. p. 31 thinks that the appearance of *ἐτέθη*, *τέθεικεν* and *ἔθηκεν* in Barn. 6. 2–3 is proof that Barnabas knew, but did not use, Isa. 28. 16 in the version used by I Peter and Romans. However, his use of *τίθημι* might well have come from Isa. 50. 7 (LXX).

which is an introduction to a loose quotation from Isa. 50. 7 (LXX) which now appears.[16] 6. 4 then quotes Ps. 118. 22 (LXX) exactly, although verse 23 is omitted,[17] following it with a loose quotation of Ps. 118. 24 which has *ἡ μεγάλη καὶ θαυμαστή* for the LXX *ἀγαλλιασώμεθα καὶ εὐφρανθῶμεν ἐν αὐτῇ, θαυμαστή* perhaps being a glance at verse 23.

The Epistle's treatment of this series of testimonia is instructive; in accordance with his practice elsewhere the writer's quotations from the LXX are often loose paraphrases – although he can quote exactly. The fact that he quotes the LXX of Isa. 8. 14 and 28. 16, as against the Hebrew of the source behind I Pet. 2. 6–8 and Rom. 9. 33, and also introduces allusions to Isa. 28. 17, 50. 7 and Ps. 118. 24 which are not found in the earlier testimonia does not suggest that he is using a written Greek testimony source or that he is directly quoting the New Testament Epistles. Rather around the original testimonium of Christ as the Stone rejected by the Builders yet made the Cornerstone, Barnabas has woven his mosaic of texts from the LXX which he has adapted to his purpose, which is clearly to emphasise the centrality of the death and resurrection of Christ. In this connexion I would especially point to the change which the writer makes in 6. 4 from the LXX of Ps. 118. 24 in order to emphasise that the day which the Lord made is "great and wonderful". There is no reason why this change should have been made if the Epistle had only been intended for the leaders of a Christian community to be read at their leisure or if it was to be read at ordinary gatherings for public worship. I suggest that the writer had in mind not simply the day of crucifixion, or any day for ordinary worship, but the day of the Paschal celebration which was the great and wonderful occasion when Christ's death and resurrection were solemnly and joyfully remembered. We know, too, that the Easter baptism formed a significant part of the Pasch and it is perhaps not mere coincidence that allusions to baptism are very prominent in this chapter.[18]

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[16] This has been previously quoted, in more exact form, at 5. 14.

[17] Quoted in the *verba Christi* Mk. 12. 10–11.

[18] 6. 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17. The Stone testimonium also appears in a baptismal context in I Pet. 2. 1–10.

c. 15. 9: "Wherefore we also celebrate with gladness the eighth day in which Jesus also rose from the dead, and was made manifest, and ascended into heaven."

The celebration which the writer has in mind is, according to 15. 8, an anticipation of the spiritual "eighth day", the day of eternity, which is to dawn at the end of the millennium or sabbath rest. But what are we to make of the mention of the resurrection, manifestation and ascension of Christ in close juxtaposition? This is a well known *crux interpretum*. Many exegetes hold [19] that the verse implies that the resurrection and ascension took place on the same day, i.e. on a particular Sunday, a theory in direct conflict with Luke – Acts although not an isolated opinion in the early Church.[20] Another view is that Barnabas believed that the resurrection and the ascension both took place on a Sunday but with an interval of time separating them, *καὶ φανερωθείς* then referring to the post-resurrection appearances recorded in the Gospels.[21] There is nothing in the Greek to compel us to accept the first view; the second is not excluded by the construction; however against both views is the conflict with the forty days tradition of Acts [22] which eventually triumphed. We wish to suggest another solution, viz. that the writer had in mind the whole drama of the redemption – death, resurrection and ascension, without considering the chronological interval between these events. The various historical "moments" stood for him together as part of the good news revealed in Christ. Such a combination would have been especially appropriate for the Paschal Feast which in Egypt would then have been

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[19] Hilgenfeld, Volkmar, Weizsäcker, Gebhardt, Kirsopp Lake, *inter alia*.

[20] Cf. Aristides ii, *μετὰ δὲ τρεῖς ἡμερας ἀνεβίω καὶ εἰς οὐρανοὺς ἀνῆλθεν*; Gospel of Peter 35–42; Codex Bobbiensis on Mk. 16. 3; Ep. Apostolorum 51; see further F. J. Dölger, *Sol Salutis*, p. 212 seq.

[21] Various traditions as to the duration of the post-resurrection appearances are found in the early centuries. Chryst. Hom. 3. 1 held that the ascension occurred on a Saturday, apparently deducing this from Acts 1. 12 "a Sabbath day's journey". Another tradition associated the ascension with the Day of Pentecost — Etheria Peregrinatio ad loca sancta 43.

[22] A number of scholars have challenged the authenticity of this tradition. Among the most recent is P. H. Menoud "*Remarques* sur les textes de l'ascension dans Luc-Actes" in Neut. Stud. für R. Bultmann (1954) p. 148 seq.

held on a Sunday.[23] In support of this is the close connexion drawn in this chapter between the parousia and Christian worship for there is evidence, up to the third century, that the Parousia was expected at Eastertide.[24] Our multiplication of Christian Festivals makes it difficult for us to grasp the fact of a single celebration which embraced the whole drama of the redemption. We find it hard to realise that there was no separate Festival of the Ascension until the latter part of the fourth century and no Whitsun celebration until the time of Tertullian.

d. The Exodus setting: The deliverance of Israel through the Exodus and entry into the promised land was, from the earliest times, a leading type of the Easter deliverance. It is found in the New Testament underlying I Pet. 1. 13–21 and 2. 9–11 and regularly in the Paschal homilies of Melito of Sardis and Hippolytus. It is significant that the events of the Exodus and the entry into the promised land are prominent in the Epistle of Barnabas although they are used not so much as historical types but to yield allegorical meanings; Cf. especially 4. 7–8; 6. 8–17; 12. 2–9; 14. 1–4.

The writer has his own theory concerning the Jews – viz. that Moses received the covenant on their behalf but they lost it through their disobedience and worship of the golden calf[25] whereby God has given the covenant to Christians as the people of the inheritance. This theory, born of the writer's violent antipathy to his ancestral faith, and reflecting the conflict between Christianity and Judaism in Egypt in the early decades of the second century, prevented his

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[23] The celebration of the Paschal Feast on a Sunday, in opposition to the Quartodeciman position, may have been associated with the acceptance of St. Matthew's Gospel; see further M. H. Shepherd op. cit. pp. 43–4. Later evidence from Egypt (see Letter of Dionysius of Alexandria to Bishop Basilides of Cyrenaica) suggests that the character of the Egyptian celebration was similar to that of Rome.

[24] Ep. Apostolorum 6; Tert. de Bapt. 19; Hippolytus Com. on Dan. 4, 55, 1 seq.

[25] There appear to be affinities between the theology of St. Stephen and that of the writer. Cf. Acts. 7. 48–50 with Barn. 16. 1–2; Acts 7. 38–42[a], 53 with Barn. 4. 7–8, 14. 4–5; Acts 7. 41–43 with Barn. 2. 4–8; Acts 7. 56, 59–60 with Barn. 6. 7. Stephen's extreme position viz-a-viz Judaism and Jewish institutions is similar to that adopted by Barnabas. See further my article in N.T.S. Vol. 7 (Oct. 1960) pp. 31–45.

using the Passover as a historical type – for that showed the Jews in too good a light. However the strong emphasis placed on the work of Moses and on the entry into the promised land was appropriate to the Easter celebration. Cf. especially 14. 1–9 where, after a section dealing with Moses and the covenant, the writer goes on to speak of the redemption from darkness wrought by Christ; the verb λυτρόω is used 4 times in 14. 5–8; cf. 19. 2.

Another theme of the early Easter celebration is the co-existence of suffering with joy and gladness which belongs to the time when Good Friday and Easter Day had not been separated in theology or liturgy. The Epistle's strong emphasis on suffering has already been noted; yet the note of gladness, joy, hope and thanksgiving is not absent and does much to counteract the writer's somewhat arid exegesis of the Old Testament found in long stretches of the work; cf. 1. 6, 5. 3, 10. 11, 11. 11, 19. 2, 21. 9.

The Paschal theology of the Epistle is embodied in words which, if not so profound as those found in I Pet. 3–5, yet express the meaning of the celebration: "And it was manifest ... that we, through Jesus the Lord who inherits the covenant, should receive it, for he was prepared for this purpose, that when he appeared he might redeem from darkness our hearts which were already paid over to death, and given over to the iniquity of error, and by his word might make a covenant with us. For it is written that the Father enjoins on him that he should redeem us from darkness and prepare a holy people for himself. The Prophet therefore says, 'I the Lord thy God did call thee in righteousness, and I will hold thy hands, and I will give thee strength, and I have given thee for a covenant of the people, for a light to the Gentiles, to open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth from their fetters those that are bound and those that sit in darkness out of the prison house.' We know then whence we have been redeemed." (14. 5–7).

C. *The Baptismal Setting of the Epistle:* In the early Church the regular season for baptism was Easter and the celebration of the baptismal-eucharist was central to the Paschal liturgy. If therefore the arguments of this note are sound we should expect to find baptism mentioned and baptismal language used in an epistle intended to be read at the Paschal gathering.

a. Explicit references to Baptism: these occur in 6. 11, 14; 11. 1–11; 16. 8. Indeed the allocation of a whole chapter of the Epistle (Ch. 11) to the prefiguring of the sacrament in the Old Testament illustrates the importance which it held in the eyes of the writer. Baptism is, for him, being "made new" (*ἀναχαινίσας* in 6. 11; *ἐγενόμεθα καινοί* in 16. 8); being "created afresh" (*ἀναπλάσσοντος* in 6. 11; *ἐξ ἀρχῆς κτιζόμενοι* in 16. 8) and "receiving the remission of sins" (6. 11; 11. 11; 16. 8). This language denotes the change wrought in the spiritual condition of the believer by baptism and is parallel to the use of *ἀναγεννάω* in I Pet. 1. 3, 23 and *ἀρτιγέννητος* in I Pet. 2. 2.

b. References to Baptismal Practice: After quoting in 11. 1–7 a series of texts from Jer. 2. 12–13; Isa. 16. 1–2; 45. 2. 3; 33. 16–18 and Ps. 1. 3–6 which are believed to prefigure baptism, the writer continues: "Mark how he described the water and the cross together. For he means this: blessed are those who hoped on the cross, and descended into the water *(κατέβησαν εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ)* . . . He means to say that we go down into the water full of sins and foulness and we come up *(ἀναβαίνομεν)* [26] bearing the fruit of fear in our hearts, and having hope in Jesus in the Spirit *(τὴν ἐλπίδα εἰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐν τῷ πνεύματι ἔχοντες)*. (11. 8 and 11). Clearly baptism is by immersion, rather than affusion, and the descent into and ascent from the waters effect the change from a life of sin and foulness to the new life in Christ with its fruits of faith, hope and love (11. 8b). The mention of hoping on the Cross and hoping in Jesus, with which may be associated the hoping on the Name of 16. 8, suggests a stereotyped formula. Certainly there is other evidence that baptism in the Name of Jesus or Jesus Christ was not unknown in the early Church [27] and, even in the third and fourth centuries, there

[26] For immersion in baptism see Acts 8. 38; Hermas Mand. 4, 3, 1; Sim. 9, 16, 4–6. The moment of "coming up" carried a profound meaning in Jewish proselyte baptism which many regard as the precursor of Christian baptism; cf. Bab. Yeb 47[b] "when he has undergone baptism and come up (ṭabhal we'ala) he is like an Israelite in all respects." According to D. Daube, the N.T. and Rabbinic Judaism p. 112 the "coming up" of Jesus after His baptism (Mk. 1. 10, Mt. 3. 16) is proof that Christian baptism originated in the Jewish rite.

[27] Acts 2. 38, 8. 16, 10. 48; Cf. also the early confession attributed to the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8. 37 (D).

were those who held the one name to be sufficient.[28] The archaic features of this account appear to reflect primitive practice. The close connexion drawn between baptism and the cross is also to be noted.[29]

c. Catechetical Background: A regular preparation of candidates prior to the Easter Baptism must have been established early in the history of the Church if we are to judge from the almost universal existence of the catechumenate in the third century.[30] In the last decades the researches of Drs. Carrington, Selwyn and Moule[31] have shown that much catechetical material is to be found underlying the New Testament Epistles and undoubtedly some of this was used prior to the Easter Baptism. These scholars have shown that Christianity, to some extent, was indebted to Jewish models in the working out of its catechetical forms and I have sought to show elsewhere[32] that the Epistle of Barnabas reflects very closely the order and substance of the instruction given by the Tannaim to proselytes to Judaism. In this respect the Epistle stands closer to Judaism than the New Testament Epistles, where instruction in the specific Christian virtues is more prominent.

A good example of this Jewish catechetical material is the section on the Two Ways of Light and Darkness (Barn. 18–20) which is also found in Didache 1–5. The question of the relationship between these versions has been frequently discussed in the last forty years without a final decision; however the discovery of a section headed "On the Two Spirits in Man", containing similar material, in the Qumran Manual of Discipline[33] seems to have proved that a pre-Christian Two Ways instruction lies behind the later Christian versions.

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[28] Cyprian Ep. 73. 4, 75. 5; Ambrose de Spiritu S. 1. 3:

[29] Cf. Jn. 7. 38, 19. 34; Rom. 6. 3; Ign. ad Eph. 18. 2. We do not know if the custom of signing with the cross was yet in use. Certainly by the time of Tertullian it was widely practised — cf. de Coron. Militis 4.

[30] Cross op. cit. p. 30–31.

[31] The Primitive Christian Catechism; The First Epistle of St. Peter; J.T.S. Vol. 1 (New Series) 1950. pp. 29–41.

[32] A.T.R. Vol. 41 (July 1959) pp. 177–190.

[33] I.QS 3. 13 – 4. 26.

Barnabas' version is certainly appropriate to the preparation of catechumens for baptism. We especially note the social groupings he had in mind. Thus: "Thou shalt not withold thy hand from thy son or from thy daughter, but shall teach them the fear of God from their youth up . . . Thou shalt obey thy masters as a type of God in modesty and fear; thou shalt not command in bitterness thy slave or handmaid who hope in the same God, lest they cease to fear the God who is over you both; for he came not to call men with respect of persons, but those whom the Spirit prepared." (19. 5 and 7).

Codes of social relationships are also found underlying the catechetical teaching of the New Testament Epistles [34] and the version here is of interest in showing that the Christian community, in Barnabas' time, was of mixed social grouping containing not only slaves but wealthy people who were slave owners. Daily gatherings for instruction, perhaps at a Christian "school", or at daily public worship, are also enjoined upon catechumens (19. 10). The Way of Life which the Christian was expected to follow was laid down in detail.

d. Credal References: The use of a creed at baptism is very ancient as is shown by Acts 8. 37 (D) and possibly by I Pet. 3. 18–22.[35] Barnabas is not a systematic writer and his thought is overlaid with the allegorical interpretation of the smallest Old Testament incident – yet nevertheless traces of credal formulae are perhaps to be found in the Epistle; cf. 5. 6–7, 7. 2 and 15. 9.

e. The Baptismal-Eucharist: At the baptismal-eucharist, which formed the climax of the Paschal liturgy, the newly-baptized, according to the rite of Hippolytus, received three cups in succession – of water, milk and honey mingled, and wine (Ap. Trad. 23. 2). Apart from the reference to milk in I Pet. 2. 2, which is not certainly a reference to the rite,[36] possibly the only mention of it in Christian sources prior to the time of Hippolytus [37] is in this Epistle. Thus

[34] Selwyn op. cit. pp. 426–439.

[35] Cross, op. cit. pp. 31–32.

[36] Cross, op. cit. pp. 32–33 thinks that it is. The absence of any mention of honey, however, suggests caution.

[37] Clem. Alex. Paed. I. 6, 34 seq. and Tert. de Cor. 3, adv. Marc. I. 14 are further witnesses to the cup of honey and milk. Less certain is the testimony

6. 8: "What does the other Prophet, Moses, say to them? 'Lo, thus saith the Lord God, enter into the good land which the Lord sware that he would give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and inherit it, a land flowing with milk and honey.' " This is a quotation based on Ex. 33. 1, 3 (LXX) and Lev. 20. 24 (LXX) and that the entry into the good land signified, for the writer, entry into the Christian Church through baptism is conclusively shown by 6. 10, 11, 14. The phrase *ἄνθρωπος γὰρ γῆ ἐστιν πάσχουσα* in 6. 9 has created difficulties for commentators and it seems best to take *πάσχουσα* in the sense of "capable of suffering change", "capable of being moulded into a human being",[38] in which case the reference is to Adam, moulded from the dust of the earth, and, by a play on the words, to Jesus who suffers. And as *γῆ* in 6. 10, 11 refers to the land flowing with milk and honey, i.e. entry into Christ through baptism, the writer regards baptism as having its origin in the Passion of Christ – an association we have already found at 11. 2, 8. The writer returns to the milk and honey theme in 6. 17: "What then is the milk and honey? Because a child[39] is first nourished with honey, and afterwards with milk. Thus therefore we also, being nourished on the faith of the promise and by the word, shall live and possess the earth".

In the light of the writer's elusive method of referring to Christian doctrines and practices and the strong baptismal associations in this chapter we are probably justified in finding here an allusion to the practice of administering the cup of milk and honey to the newly baptized – one of the earliest references to the custom in Christian literature. And in support of this is the fact that the direction for the benediction over the milk and honey in the Hippolytean rite

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of Justin I Apol. 65, 3. That the custom is an early one is however suggested by Gnostic sources; thus Tert. adv. Marc. I. 14 says that Marcion did not reprove "the water of the Creator whereby He washes them, nor the oil wherewith He anoints them, nor the mingling of the honey and milk with which He nourishes them as children, nor the bread by which He represents His own Body". Cf. also Logion 23 of the Gospel of Thomas (c. 140 A.D.): "Jesus saw little ones receiving milk. He said to His disciples, these little ones receiving milk are like those who enter into the Kingdom."

[38] J. A. Kleist, Ancient Christian Writers, Vol. 6, p. 173 note 70.

[39] This association is also found in Hippolytus where the faithful are likened to little children.

contained a reference to the Israelites of the exodus period and their entry into the promised land – a mystical connexion found here. Traces of the baptismal-eucharist are perhaps also to be found in 2. 6, 9, 10 where *προσφορά*, *προσαγεῖν* and *θυσία* are used against a background of worship and spiritual offerings. We may also note the reference to worship in 6. 16 in a baptismal context.

f. The Theme of Darkness and Light: A prominent feature of baptismal imagery has always been that of a passage from darkness to light and this received concrete expression in the Paschal Vigil which began in darkness and ended in broad daylight. In later times the light of baptism came to be symbolised by the liturgical use of a Paschal candle. It is significant that the Two Ways instruction in this Epistle is preceded by a short section which describes them as "Two Ways of teaching and authority, one of Light and one of Darkness" (18. 1) in contrast to the Didache's Way of Life and Death (Did. 1. 1). Other references to the redemption from darkness occur in 14. 6 and in 17. 7, 8 where Christians are to be a light to the Gentiles (quoting Isa. 42. 6, 7; 49. 6, 7).

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The evidence assembled above will be variously estimated and any one item, by itself, may be thought insufficient to establish the Epistle's Paschal setting. However, cumulatively they seem to be of considerable weight. The themes of the Epistle of Barnabas, which shine through much allegorism, are Suffering, Resurrection and Redemption, catechetical instruction and moral duties, Baptism and perhaps the Eucharist – the whole set against the background of the Exodus and entry into the Promised Land. This combination is very remarkable and contains just those elements which appear in the celebration of the Paschal Feast when it comes into historical perspective. The Epistle, I submit, would have been appropriate to that great occasion when every member of the Christian community addressed, including many whom the writer knew (1. 4), would have been present for the celebration of their redemption and the baptism and first eucharist of new converts. This Epistle is not the liturgy of the celebrant but is a homily to be read at the

Paschal Vigil [40] reminding older Christians, at this solemn yet joyous time, of their own catechumenate and baptism and of their duty to stand firm against the assaults of a militant Judaism. This was a time when this community was at the "crossroads" and Barnabas, with great respect and charity, seeks to keep them on the right path. The Epistle's exegesis, which to our eyes is so strange, should not blind us to its strong practical motif. Moreover, the frequency with which Clement of Alexandria cites it and the high authority he ascribes to it, suggest that it had long been read in public worship and we may surmise that it was the importance ascribed to it by its original recipients, and the occasion on which it was first read, which led to its survival in the Church.

The evidence for the celebration of the Paschal Feast in Egypt in the early decades of the second century fills out the later unequivocal evidence of Melito of Sardis and Hippolytus and the references in Irenaeus and Origen. We can hardly doubt that Easter was celebrated from the earliest times whatever view we may take of the New Testament evidence.

Melksham (*Wilts.*), Shaw Vicarage.

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[40] G. D. Kilpatrick, — The Origins of the Gospel according to St. Matthew p. 65 emphasises the importance of the public reading of Christian literature as a guarantee of its survival. He believes that, with the exception of Papias, Hegesippus and the Apologists, the whole of Christian literature before Irenaeus was used for reading in the services of the Church. Considerable liberty existed in the choice of books to be read in the earliest period. Cf. Justin I Apol. 67. 3 seq; Eus. H.E. 4. 23; Rufinus in Symb. Apost. 38; Jerome de Vir. Illustr. 17. In later times homilies were normally read at the pro-anaphora which consisted of lections from the LXX, homilies, prayers and psalmody — a sequence taken over from the synagogue service. There is however no evidence from the pre-Nicene period that the pro-anaphora formed part of the Paschal rite as such; lections, homilies and instructions were usually given at the Paschal Vigil.